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EXAMINER

PATTERSON, MARC A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1772

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

AS/2

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/786,355

Applicant(s)

LINDENBERGER ET AL.

Examiner

Marc A Patterson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 June 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 10-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

WITHDRAWN REJECTIONS

1. The finality of the previous Action, of record on page 7 of the previous Action, is withdrawn.

NEW REJECTIONS

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The phrase 'sealable outlet piece' is indefinite, because its meaning is unclear. For purposes of examination, the phrase will be assumed to mean a piece of the shoulder to which a cap is screwed on.

4. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The phrase 'said plastic bag comprising a plastic film and a shoulder piece, said film material forming one face wall and two side walls of said tube' is indefinite as it is unclear whether the claimed invention is a 'bag' or 'tube' and whether there is any difference between the 'bag' and 'tube.' For purposes of examination, the method of using will be assumed to be any method of using.

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5. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 18 recites the limitation "the side walls" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "the strip – shaped side edge sections" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "the strip – shaped side edge sections" in line 7. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "said side edge section" in line 8. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "the strip – shaped side edge sections" in line 9. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "the inner boundaries of the two side edge sections" in line 10. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "face wall" in line 10. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "face wall" in line 12. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "face wall" in line 15. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 18 recites the limitation "face wall" in line 16. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. For purposes of examination, the method of making will be assumed to be any method.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 10 – 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruenbacher et al (WO 96/19395).

With regard to Claim 10, Gruenbacher et al disclose a toothpaste tube comprising a plastic film (page 1, lines 10 – 20), the tube having two side walls (folds which are sealed; page 5, lines 21 – 28); the tube comprises a shoulder piece (shoulder, which comprises a gusset panel, and which forms a face wall; page 4, lines 3 – 11) which is stiff compared to remainder of the tube (the V – shaped seals of the shoulder increase the structural rigidity of the tube; page 4, lines 3 – 11); the side walls are adhered to one another along two strip – shaped edge sections (page 5, lines 21 – 28; Figure 1) and one strip – shaped end edge section (the ends of the edge sections; page 5, lines 21 – 28; Figure 1); a cap is screwed to the shoulder (page 6, lines 19 – 29); and a flange which is attached to a face wall (the V – shaped seal of the gusset panel; page 4, lines 3 – 11); the film material comprises a 75 micron thick inner seal layer (page 4, lines 29 – 37; page 5, lines 1 – 5) and a 20 micron thick outside layer (page 4, lines 29 – 37; page 5, lines 1 – 5); the strip – shaped edge sections have a width greater than 4 mm (the width is 0.125 to 0.375 inches; page 6, lines 1 – 12); the inner boundaries of the two side edge sections face one another

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(the tube is made from a web which is folded and sealed; page 5, lines 21 – 28) and are angled to the inside toward one another (the tube is tapered; page 4, lines 3 – 11).

Gruenbacher et al fail to disclose edge sections having a width of at least 6.5% of the total width of the side wall. However, Gruenbacher et al disclose edge sections having a width of 4 mm as discussed above. Therefore, the percentage of the total width would be readily determined through routine optimization by one having ordinary skill in the art depending on the desired end use of the product. It therefore would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to vary the percentage of the total width, since the percentage of the total width would be readily determined through routine optimization by one having ordinary skill in the art depending on the desired end result as shown by Gruenbacher et al. *In re Boesch and Slaney*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

With regard to Claim 11, the flange of the shoulder piece at the edges of the face wall has two bent clips (V – shaped seals; page 4, lines 3 – 11) which join the side walls (V – shaped seals; page 4, lines 3 – 11).

With regard to Claim 12, the inner seal consists of polyethylene (page 4, lines 29 – 37; page 5, lines 1 – 5).

With regard to Claim 13, the outside layer consists of polyethylene terephthalate (page 4, lines 29 – 37; page 5, lines 1 – 5).

With regard to Claim 14, between the inner seal layer and outer layer there is a barrier layer (page 4, lines 29 – 37; page 5, lines 1 – 5).

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8. Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruenbacher et al (WO 96/19395) in view of Komiya et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,612,106).

Gruenbacher et al disclose a toothpaste tube comprising a barrier layer as discussed above. The thickness of the barrier layer is 10 microns (page 4, lines 29 – 37; page 5, lines 1 – 5); Gruenbacher et al fail to disclose a barrier layer comprising aluminum.

Komiya et al teach that it is well known in the art to use aluminum as a barrier layer of a toothpaste tube, for the purpose of preventing deterioration due to oxidation (column 1, lines 18 – 32).

It therefore would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made to have provided for a barrier layer comprising aluminum in Gruenbacher et al in order to prevent deterioration due to oxidation as taught by Komiya et al.

9. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruenbacher et al (WO 96/19395) in view of Holoubek et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,238,148).

Gruenbacher et al disclose a toothpaste tube comprising a barrier layer as discussed above. Gruenbacher et al fail to disclose a barrier layer consisting of para – aramide.

Holoubek et al teach the use of polyamide (column 4, lines 13 – 26) as a barrier layer in a toothpaste tube, for the purpose of obtaining low gas permeability (column 4, lines 13 – 26).

It therefore would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time Applicant's invention was made to have provided for a barrier layer comprising polyamide in Gruenbacher et al in order to obtain low gas permeability as taught by Holoubek et al.

With regard to the claimed aspect of the barrier layer consisting of 'para – aramide,' Holubek et al teach the use of a polyamide as discussed above; the claimed aspect of the layer consisting of 'para – aramide' therefore reads on Holubek et al.

ANSWERS TO APPLICANT'S ARGUMENTS

10. Applicant's arguments regarding the withdrawal of Claims 17 – 18 from consideration have been considered and have been found to be persuasive. The finality of the previous Action has therefore been withdrawn and the claims considered above.

Applicant's arguments regarding the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of Claims 10 –14 as being unpatentable over Grunbacher et al (WO 96/19395), 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of Claim 15 as being unpatentable over Grunbacher et al (WO 96/19395) in view of Komiya et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,612,106), 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of Claim 16 as being unpatentable over Grunbacher et al (WO 96/19395) in view of Holoubek et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,238,148), of record on page 2 of the previous Action, have been carefully considered but have not been found to be persuasive for the reasons set forth below.

Applicant argues, on page 2 of Paper No. 11, that the amendment of Claim 10 to claim a 'sealable outlet piece' clarifies the meaning of 'sealable outlet connection piece.' However, the meaning of the term 'sealable' also remains unclear, as it is not clearly defined in the specification.

Applicant also argues, on page 3, that Gruenbacher et al would not have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to provide a separate shoulder piece, made of a material stiffer than the plastic material used for the tube body. However, a separate shoulder piece made of a material

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stiffer than the plastic material used for the tube body is not claimed; furthermore, a separate shoulder piece is disclosed by Gruenbacher et al (gusset panel; page 3, lines 35 – 37; page 4, lines 1 – 11), which is stiff compared to remainder of the tube (the V – shaped seals of the panel increase the structural rigidity of the tube; page 4, lines 3 – 11).

Applicant also argues, on page 3, that Gruenbacher et al does not suggest that the inner boundaries of the side edge sections, especially in the vicinity of or adjacent to the face wall, should be angled or bent towards one another. The edge section of the reference appear to be parallel, Applicant argues, and nothing in Gruenbacher et al would lead a person to deviate from his parallel arrangement. However, as stated on page 2 of the previous Action, the inner boundaries of the two side edge sections are angled to the inside toward one another (the tube is tapered; page 4, lines 3 – 11); furthermore, even if the edge sections were parallel, it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to vary the angle between the edge sections, since the angle would be readily determined through routine optimization by one having ordinary skill in the art depending on the desired end result as shown by Gruenbacher et al., in the absence of unexpected results. *In re Boesch and Slaney, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980)*.

Applicant also argues, on page 3, that the claimed reinforcing clips have no counterpart in Gruenbacher et al. However, as stated on page 2 of the previous Action, the flange of the shoulder piece at the edges of the face wall has two bent clips (V – shaped seals which increase structural strength; page 4, lines 3 – 11).


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Conclusion

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Marc Patterson, whose telephone number is (703) 305-3537. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by phone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon, can be reached at (703) 308-4251. FAX communications should be sent to (703) 872-9310. FAXs received after 4 P.M. will not be processed until the following business day.

Marc A. Patterson, PhD.

Marc Patterson
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ALEXANDER S. THOMAS
PRIMARY EXAMINER